

4VAC15-40-70. Game: In General: Open dog training season.

Summary:

The proposal is to (i) clarify where the possession of firearms and the shooting of properly marked mallards and pigeons is allowed (ii) eliminate the Sunday exception to the shooting of properly marked mallards and pigeons and (iii) open three new Wildlife Management Areas for training dogs on quail during designated periods.

Proposed language of amendment:

4VAC15-40-70. Open dog training season.

A. Private lands and certain military areas. It shall be lawful to train dogs during daylight hours on squirrels and nonmigratory game birds on private lands, and on rabbits and nonmigratory game birds on Fort A.P. Hill, Fort Pickett, and Quantico Marine Reservation. Participants in this dog training season shall not have any weapons other than starter pistols in their possession, must comply with all regulations and laws pertaining to hunting and no game shall be taken; provided, however, that weapons may be in possession on private lands when training dogs on captive raised and properly marked mallards and pigeons so that they may be immediately shot or recovered, ~~except on Sunday.~~

B. It shall be lawful to train dogs on rabbits on private lands from ½ hour before sunrise until midnight.

C. Designated portions of certain department-owned lands. It shall be lawful to train dogs on quail on designated portions of the Amelia Wildlife Management Area, Cavalier Wildlife Management Area, Chester F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area, Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area, Mattaponi Wildlife Management Area and White Oak Mountain Wildlife Management Area from September 1st to the day prior to the opening date of the quail hunting season, both dates inclusive. Participants in this dog training season shall not have any weapons other than starter pistols in their possession, shall not release pen-raised birds, must comply with all regulations and laws pertaining to hunting and no game shall be taken.

D. Designated department-owned lands. It shall be lawful to train dogs during daylight hours on rabbits and nonmigratory game birds on the Weston Wildlife Management Area from September 1 to March 31, both dates inclusive. Participants in this dog training season shall not have any weapons other than starter pistols in their possession, shall not release pen-raised birds, must comply with all regulations and laws pertaining to hunting and no game shall be taken.

Rationale:

The current regulation language does not make it clear where the possession and use of firearms to harvest properly marked released mallards and pigeons is allowed. Further since Sunday hunting has been allowed, the exception to Sunday shooting in this regulation is inconsistent with the allowance of Sunday hunting. There is now no reason why private landowners cannot train with and shoot properly marked released mallards or pigeons on Sundays on private lands.

These proposed changes also provide more upland game bird dog training opportunity on public lands. An often expressed view among new bird dog trainers is a lack of public lands available for training for those bird dog owners that may not own or have access to private lands.